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In Quest of the Beautiful



by
William Repton

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C. K. OGDEN

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William Repton

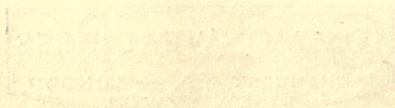
“Beauty, when the vision is purged to see through the outer vesture, is Truth, and when we have pierced to the deepest core it is to be found Love.”

From “Impressions and Comments”

by HAVELOCK ELLIS.

Cover designed by JOAN REPTON





IN QUEST OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

PRELUDE.

WHAT is the purpose of your life? Has it a purpose? Or, again, have you created a purpose for it? Perhaps you have reached the goal of your desire, and found it as empty as all the illusions of Ecclesiastes! Or, perhaps, you have rested in your poverty, with the illusions of riches yet to come. Or, again, in a fit of despair, you have said that there is no purpose to your life. Whatever your conclusions, who am I to judge you, or anyone else? Let me stand in the shadow of Flaubert, and let him speak: "The sight of a man daring to judge his neighbour would send me into convulsions of laughter, if it did not arouse my disgust and pity." With the Confucian doctrine of "fraternal deference" we will each go our own way—or ways.

Astrologers state that, when a human being is born, a chord is struck through heaven and earth. As far as I can discover, they do not explain, or define, the phenomenon attending the birth of consciousness. I do not blame them for this or any other omission. They will not want to burn me, or ostracise me, for this difference of opinion with them. They will not look on me as a lost soul if I actively oppose them. The birth of consciousness is nothing to those who are only capable of seeing with the eye instead of through it.

In the middle of the journey of our life I came to
Myself in a dark wood, where the straight way was lost.

If I have lost the straight way at the zenith of my life, I have the memory of it. With the birth of consciousness, about the age of five, I had a glimpse of the Beautiful; and in many protean shapes I have seen it since, and, if my body has been over many crooked paths, consciousness and its proximity to the Beautiful have traced a straight road in my lonely quest. There are compensations for the responsibility of living; there are quiet consolations which are our very own property; and both may be claimed, if life is regarded as a gift held for a little space in eternity. There may be aims more noble, more lofty, and even more clearly defined than that of my quest. An individual may dedicate his life to the service of others in science, or, like the giants of history, in leading an unpopular cause, that, a hundred years later, is quietly absorbed and taken for granted by society with scarce a "thank you." But, in a quest of the Beautiful the following over the hills and dales of advancing years, yields a satisfaction, not of the spectacular, or vehement, kind that

satisfies for a time, but of that kind, rather, which is continuous. There is a reward for the watcher and the searcher—not in the tradesman's gold, but, rather, in the reflection and satisfaction of having given a purpose to one's life. In the periphery of the Beautiful we, helped, not a little, by poets in their uncommon treatment of things, shall find common objects that in daily life we only superficially notice. Browning's foolhardy sunbeams, caught with a single splash from Pippa's ewer

One splash of water ruins you asleep,
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits
Wheeling and counter-wheeling,
Reeling, broken beyond healing:
Now grow together on the ceiling.

Wilde's definition of the searchers, "Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things, for these there is hope; but the elect are those who find in beautiful things nothing but beauty"; these are my finger posts on the journey at the beginning. But, on reaching the destinations indicated by singers, the Beautiful appears again in another form; and there is no rest or looking backwards. My wanderings may be yours, O reader! If not, we will share them, for these are not adventures that come within the circle of the novelist dealing with his creations, but rather they appear on the records of the memory.

I.—NATURE BEAUTY.

IN the county of Staffordshire I was born; and the northern part of it, bordering on the county of Derbyshire, was my home between the age of five and fourteen. With my grandparents I lived in a little thatched and whitewashed cottage, in Sandy Lane. The lane was true to its name. Wintry rains brought down sand from the hills and the moors. A few houses at the foot of the hills were named Baddeley Green; and the Green itself, a large open space, was used for free grazing by gypsies and small farmers. In this part I lived for many years, having little or no contact with the outside world; happy, peaceful, and contented. Winter would find me snaring birds—and releasing them again. Yellow-billed blackbirds, blue-tits, greenfinches, goldfinches, and chaffinches—these did I catch; but, without any instruction from my old guardians, were set at liberty; as I had an idea that they wanted to "go home." Then would come the Spring—and bird-nesting. There was dancing round the maypole at the nearest village of Milton; and once only did I see the well dressed with flowers. It seemed quite natural to me that it should be dressed in that manner; it was the cause of much trouble if the well ran dry.

The woods and the fields enchanted me. Anemones, ferns, cuckoo flowers, the wild rose and honeysuckle drew me with their beauty; and my love for them was akin to worship. In solitude would I walk forth—yet my solitude never troubled me. The trees, the grass and the flowers were my friends. From my grandfather, I had heard the tale of Robin Hood. The most striking part of it, to me, was Robin Hood's fight with Little John; and, to this day, I do not forget my admiration of the bold outlaw.

The fresh spring winds would blow across the newly ploughed fields, bringing with them the cry of the lapwing. Cloud-shapes would flit across the fields, like shadows from some overhead giant. There would be green brook-reeds to be gathered for thatching our hay-ricks; and life was a perpetual delight. Honey from our own beehives; bread of our own making and baking; cowslip and elderberry wine; thus did I live, after the birth of consciousness, next door to Nature, as it were. When the meadows were ready for mowing, I would weep a little for the buttercups, the lady-smocks, and the sorrel to be laid low by the scythe. The sharpening or whetting of a scythe, even now, recalls all those memories; and the sound of church bells in the distance always carries me back again to the days of youth. It is not that the bells impress me; it is that associations are recollected through their sound. Bells were not needed to call me to admiration, or worship, of the beauties of the woods and the fields; and, to this day, there seems to me to be something wrong if it is necessary to *remind* people to worship. But I am only speaking of what naturally fell on the waxen tablets of my youthful consciousness. It is a serious matter to settle the kind of unnatural teaching that shall be written on the plastic mind of the young.

II.—PHYSICAL BEAUTY.

THE birth of consciousness meant to me a clear understanding of external objects. Not to be hypercritical it meant the earliest and clearest impression of the many forms of objects in the outside world. One day, whilst walking near a hedge-row in our meadow with my grandfather, the first startled cry of the blackbird fell on my ears. In a honeysuckle bush to which I could walk now after a wandering of thirty-nine years, I was shown its nest containing four eggs.

Near this spot, in spring, I picked the first lady-smock; but now, lady-smocks, rare, sweet and welcome, do not appear to me as the first. Then there was the first meadow-boot, in which the sun had poured his gold, and from which a perfume came as distinct as that of the wallflower, the honeysuckle, or the dog-rose. Perfume seems to be the hammer

that strikes the bell of the memory; and, in a flash, it will bridge old age with youth.

Farewell, then, to those beautiful objects that first made their entrance into consciousness; but farewell, only, to the clarity and intensity of the first glimpsing—and, with these, were such homely products of the garden, sage, thyme, marjoram, and basil. It would not be an excess of gratitude to be in debt to life for such gifts of experience that afterwards in their common acceptance, make life an interwoven pattern of diversity.

I now came to the beauty of appearances—the “maia,” or illusion of things. The outside world appeared to be telling me, although I could not hear it, that I was thrown into an eternal process of change.

Rachel was the daughter of a farmer. In my visits to her home, where I would ride bareback on a Shetland pony, I often saw her. Her type of beauty still haunts me. With a pale, clear complexion, with cheeks ever so slightly tinged with the faintest red, with fine glossy, dark hair—she appeared to me as a Goddess. In her presence I was always shy. She would be about twenty years of age, whilst I was but ten; and somehow, I would always connect her with her biblical namesake. She died suddenly. At a later time, I met the same type; and, in my childish ignorance, I thought that she had not died—the type had possession of my mind. With the greatest effort it is impossible to recall the details of Rachel's dress; but I still remember her face as a dream of beauty; an outward sign of loveliness that penetrated my mind, leaving its mark to this day.

We only stand on the fringe of that country where the mystery of affinity will disappear. Our loves and hatreds are, in many cases, merely superficial—in many cases they rest on appearances only; and we do not explain them by the word “instinct.” The Tower of Babel may be the symbol of more than is implied in the diversity of tongues. Good and bad spirits walk abroad in the bodily vesture of beauty and ugliness; we must not allow our judgment to be seduced by sirens nor our prejudices to be led by appearances.

Nature-beauty of form, colour, or, perfume is objective. No one would fight over the beauty of a landscape or the scent of a dog-rose. It is this quality of beauty that makes an irresistible appeal; it is this disinterested interest in beauty that separates nature-beauty from the individual physical form of beauty. Into physical beauty enters the ego of conquest or possession; but this fact, although creating a difference, is finally cancelled by old age and dissolution.

Not for long did I rest in the illusion of physical beauty. Although, by training and hardship, my body was toughened to rough usage, this afforded me little satisfaction. Although the skin of my body had the appearance of white satin, and

my muscles were so well developed that I could allow an average person to stand on my chest or abdomen, this afforded no satisfaction. In a fight with a bricklayer and a gypsy I felt sorry that I had drawn blood in each case. Of what use, then, was a well-strengthened body, a strong instrument, when even conquest was no satisfaction? In the world of physical beauty I wandered in the quest of the absolute, not knowing that, by my exertions, I had only rendered the physical life bearable—I had only, as it were, cleansed the rust off the metal of life.

Here, I pay a tribute to the ideal of the late Eugene Sandow, his worship of the body, for life without health is like food without salt. He encouraged me to persevere in perfecting the body; and, gradually, I came to see the object of my quest in well-developed arms, legs and body—but there was no halt at this point. A battered volume of Byron fell into my hands; and, for good or evil, the emotional side of my life was developed, exploited; and it became a master for a time.

The worship of Jupiter was the love of order, and a rebellion against the ravages of chaos. In the history of the ages, form has been a discipline of mankind. The Hogarth line of beauty; the *cæsura*, as used by Milton in his blank verse; the repugnance felt, through the eye looking on a flat surface; these are all mute witnesses to the fact of a love of form. The physical form, male and female, wherein the straight line is banished, is the last word in the world of physical beauty. We reach, as it were, the uttermost limit of human significance on the physical side of life.

And here the quest ends, for many who dare not leave their native shore, geographically marked out by the gratification of the senses. And to here, it may be noted, many travellers return after their adventures in pursuit of a meaning to life. Here, also, is a temple set up to the God of eating and drinking, of comfort and ease; after being wearied of long and lonely quests; when prudence has uttered a warning to turn back; when the hardships of fighting have brought no recompense; and when the adventurous knight, tired of assaulting the castle perilous retires to his haven of rest. They pay their tribute to the earth spirit in the only coin that is accepted; and ratify that truth of Wilde's, when he wrote, "Nothing is more evident than that Nature hates Mind."

Keats has invested the physical life with all the beauty that an artist could bring to glorify human existence; painters have attempted to utter the last word in loveliness of form, of outline, of colour; but to all these modes of interpreting the beautiful, I say, with Cleopatra, when she saw the sea, "Is this all?"

III.—PAINTINGS.

THE eye is an advance guard of the body, and also when wedded to the mind it helped me to discern clearly another phase in my journey. Here, in profusion, were jewels of loveliness that bid defiance to time and change against which nearly all individuals are in open rebellion. Pictures are efforts to crystallize for ever some revelation of beauty; there are exceptions of course—Hogarth and Doré will come readily to mind, but the majority of paintings reveal in one aspect that attempt to catch and hold this peculiar quality of fascination, charm, and unselfish enjoyment. Colour, form, grouping, subject, all combine to make a picture, in the popular sense, "nice," and although one may not have cut a way through the jungle of books on "*Æsthetics*," a careful questioning will elicit from the critic some good reasons for this preference, although, in the first place, the judgment was limited to a single word. All the colours in the sun can be caught on canvas, and from this I can gather an idea of unity in diversity. Even an appreciation and understanding of the creative spirit in man is a joy that has beauty as a background. The spirit of work in Botticelli, and Leonardo, conveyed to me the idea that such men as these had not only seen through life, but had risen above it in a majestic manner; they had not only fully sensed beauty, but would create it for the simple reason that they had mastered life. In the quiet contemplation of the masters, here for me was an extension of the beauty I had found at the age of five, in two wild flowers. The quality of beauty had only been re-distributed, and form added. There is, however, no disputing about taste; the Tuscan School of Painting, as against the Lombard School, would fill volumes, but in all, Italian, French, Dutch, Spanish and English, there is this magic property of beauty that definitely marks progress in this quest, and in whatever direction a man's beliefs may lead him, the fact is, that, with religious and secular painters of pictures, there is this real and inescapable presentation of beauty that makes life a little more than a comedy.

In my quest another door had been opened. Beneath the surface of beauty I had found by accident something unexpected that commanded me to go forward. It was a picture in the National Art Gallery, painted by Paolo Caliari or Paolo Veronese. The subject is St. Helena. Vision of the Invention of the Cross. There is a life-size figure of a beautiful woman reclining asleep at an open window, and two cupids are bearing a cross through the air. On the woman's face is a tranquil expression, and, without words, woman's destiny is there for all with eyes to see. The hand of the painter in this picture has touched the minor chords in the symphony of the world's history, but with the insight of

genius there is no trace of rebellion or struggle against the facts of life, and the sense of fact is as rare as snow in June.

There was also a special charm about Murillo's picture of "A Boy Drinking." Something vague and roguish, about the boy's eyes; something perhaps indicative of the eternal fun that exists in a boy's world before the sticks and stones of misdirected modern life will beat and knock out the elemental ideas that all great and human men have retained only by a strong will. In pursuing beauty then, I was brought to the undercurrent of appearances; to stay in that stage for all time would leave me on shifting sands, but a return to the subjective pleasure of looking on all my old favourites is always the means of being quit of the make believe, the senseless clamour, the froth and the stupidity of society that is full of men but lacks a man.

Rembrandt's portraits are mostly an undertone of beauty. That part of the bodily vesture known as the face is an index to the sport and grim earnestness of time. It was a terrifying thought to imagine what the original of those eyes had looked upon from the cradle to the grave. The weather-beaten and wrinkled cheeks of "An Old Lady" had once been smooth and round; those lips had once been a prize, and a fair throat has vanished and remains in the picture as simply a setting for the head. Has beauty vanished here? I think not. There is no illusion left in his subject. She has seen the coming and going of children; over the hills and dales of pleasure and pain she has come at last to the haven of tranquillity, which is not without compensation and which does not lack the essentials of beauty—but in a slightly different form. External beauty has disappeared, but it can be found in the old counsel, wisdom, and experience; but these were later discoveries in the search and pursuit of something that runs like a silver thread through life.

My old loves, greetings and farewell! You have helped me in my quest. All the pictures in the world are but embroidered and coloured myth—useful, helpful and elevating. You are but coloured paper round the light which Chaucer's pilgrims see in varying degrees of clearness. As such, you have your rightful kingship, and yield to your subjects the beneficent blessing of hope, encouragement, and fortitude against despair. In the house of history you have cheered with your beauty the lives of those who are now but shadows; a little warmth from you has kept at bay the chill of barbarity, the Philistines, the Puritans, whose only colour is no colour at all—grey. Not the least of your virtues is that of being able to satisfy the finer side of man when his feet falter and his eyes grow dim in the dust from the battle of life. There is hope for me if I cannot pursue my quest any further than profound admiration for those who in their works seek to subjugate their natural gifts in the service of beauty.

IV.—MUSIC.

At the age of twenty the vampire-like music of Tannhauser rode roughshod over my emotions in the quest that I was consciously and unconsciously a pilgrim, a knight, a beggar and a thief. Tristan and Isolde, a long-drawn-out seductive and depressing opera, told me that I was knocking at the wrong door. Tschaikowsky, with his Symphony Pathetique and his Valse Autumne did not scarify me to the same extent; his setting of the Volga Boatmen's Song told me to persevere—to take up my staff again for my home did not lie in the city of seven hills. Then came the wedding of Mendelssohn's music with the play of "The Midsummer Night's Dream," with its healing and soothing blessedness, with the refreshing wine of harmony and lightness that seemed to invite the very brain itself—to dance. I could feel the rain in his "Spring Song"; it was nearer to the commonsense of the intellect than the heavy-footed implication in the "Pilgrim's Chorus" in Tannhauser—what appears now to be original sin set to music. Farewell Wagner! Hail, to all the artistic that shall have in it, laughter, joy, and the invigorating tonic of inspiration. And did I not steal the saying of Neitzsche—although he had written it, I snatched it as my own: "What is good is easy; everything divine runs with light feet—the first proposition of my *Æsthetics*." And after that, the quest was continued and my direction more clearly defined. There was more bravery in the defiant blare of an ex-service men's band in the early hours of a chilly November morning—than in the music with its head in the noose of Theology. Prometheus, who stole fire from heaven had a kindred spirit in Tubal Cain. An insignificant mortal lifting a brass instrument to his lips is a gesture, an attitude, a defiance for one brief moment in eternity.

Schumann and Beethoven were lesser loves. Verdi has more sunshine. Donizetti, Bizet, Berlioz, have a strange invigorating effect without any reaction. The simplicity of Beethoven's Minuet in G is like the perfection of a snow-drop—but the passion flowers of Verdi had no significance and no attraction. My pilgrimage in the world of sound had brought me compensation. Some power of discrimination had brought me towards the fountain of harmony that was creative, life-furthering, and helpful. The robin's song in Autumn was a natural requiem to the toiling earth—beautiful, but without sadness, for the terrestrial resting was but an interlude for the Spring that would come again.

In youth there is a premonition, shown by a feigned air of melancholy, of the underlying sadness in life. Youth trifles with a shadow that turns, at a later period, into a reality, and this reality is a Gordian knot that many philosophers cannot even cut, much less untie. In *Lara*, *The Giaour*,

Manfred, and *Childe Harold*, as I knew through Byron appearing to me early in life, there was the undertone of sorrow, and the sensing of it was emphasized by first hearing Schubert's Unfinished Symphony. The emotions, when whipped into subjection do not play tricks now when listening to this epic of reality. How wonderful, through the medium of harmony, is this titanic struggle with a real problem by a master of his methods. And what a glorious failure! The massive and impressive theme given out by the bass states in universal terms human perplexity; that it is stated by related sounds was another aspect of the quality that had led me as a *Fata Morgana* to invite me to hold the impossible. For a little space the gloom of Schubert lifts, yet it concludes almost as the play of *King Lear*, leaving in the background only a faint flicker of hopeful fire on the horizon. The Beautiful at this point appeared to have forsaken me, and rightly so, for had I not thrown the reins on the neck of emotions letting them take me in any direction they pleased? It was necessary, therefore, to take up command again, to direct these metaphysical horses or destruction would come; in this task, the same chance that had flung the romantic Byron at me, now had another gift, but it was less doubtful. It was the company of good men, and, by wearing out the doorstep of their dwelling, I began to see Beauty in another form.

At a later date, I had cause to feel grateful even to chance. Swinburne, who has no peer in the art of praising, in his essay on Byron confirmed my debt to chance. The unseen strings of Beauty were pulling me, and it is a joy to register one poet's praise of another. If Johnson liked a good hater, he would have loved Byron, of whom Swinburne wrote:—

His glorious courage, his excellent contempt for things contemptible, and hatred for hateful men, are enough of themselves to embalm and endear his memory in the eyes of all who are worthy to pass judgment upon him.

Beauty cannot be pursued without opposition in the same way that a good life, in the best sense of the word, cannot be lived without stirring up strife.

To the period of enchantment by sound I bade *au revoir* only; who can bid adieu to the harmony that makes time stand still in the same manner as pictures? The coquetry in Eugene Goossen's "Four Conceits" reminded me ironically of the time when emotions were the master. There was always chance at work, bursting in and slamming the doors of intellect. At twilight by the sea shore, when one could sit and be lost in the glories of a departing sunset, there would be the singing of songs by French girls, who were returning to school. There would be, in London streets, the wandering minstrels—in rags, at tavern doors, reminding me of the first introduction to the subtle art of harmony. There would

be a poorly dressed woman singing with unmistakable beauty to a theatre queue; even in the ramshackle world of café and restaurant amid painted lips, cheap finery and vulgarity, the pure strains of music held out no uncertain hope. Such dissimilar minds as Voltaire and Gissing were agreed on the constructional and mental healing power of music. But this would seem to be as yet, an untouched source of power on the malleability of the human race that is in a hurry to go anywhere in no time.

Music is a picture maker in the mind. Faster than the hand can paint or set down in words it creates rapidly changing scenes that must re-act on the life of the listener. Russian music is nearly all sad or fierce; Italian is languorous, sensuous and sunny, German is everything, whilst the method of handling English music has made it neither select nor communal. Where English songs and music touch English life with any certainty is in taverns and village orchestras; the drawing together of an audience at Albert Hall only holds the listeners in unity for the whole or part of the performance. At the finish there is the falling apart of the units and forgetfulness; for the Englishman takes his music as he takes his beer, in the separate compartments divided by wooden partitions and not as the French in an open café.

Since the time when some inquisitive girl found a shell on the shore and placed it to her ear, and then stretched strings across the opening of the shell, this subject of music and beauty has, with gentle insistence, been with the human race. Charmides, in "The Banquet," delivers himself on the matter:—"What Socrates just now offered about the effects of wine may, in my opinion, with little difference, be applied to music and beauty, especially when they are found together; for I begin, in good earnest, to be sensible that the fine mixture buries sorrow, and is at the same time the parent of love." What ravages the Puritans made in the national drink of England, and with their own dolorous hymns may be found in Ludovici's "Indictment of Aristocracy"; what fiends and foes of natural spontaneous and healthy life may be found in history. An attack on beauty in any form may be described as blasphemy, but we have no courts at present for the trial.

Above the weary circle of eating, drinking, and sleeping, beauty in harmony, beauty in colour, beauty in form will bring the individual. Movement then becomes spiral. He is fitted for the great adventure in the infinite world of experience. He has been given his first pair of wings, and perdition follows if they are not used. The secret traps of black magic beset his course, but there is always the alternative of white magic. There is no mystery about these two terms; any glance at the lives of gifted individuals will serve as an example of the two paths which are written about by

esoteric writers who seek to make a mountain out of a mole-hill. When once this spiral movement begins in the search, progression becomes easier—plodding gives place to reliant walking, the distant hills of beauty become more enchanting, and beauty now is more responsive and is less elusive.

V.—POETRY.

THE guardians of wisdom do not come out of their strongholds to meet you. Readers of Olive Schreiner will remember a short sketch in *Dreams* entitled "The Hunter." An old man, personified by the name of Wisdom tells the Hunter of Truth: "On the grains of credulity she will not feed; in the net of wishes her feet cannot be held; in the air of these valleys she will not breathe." And the searcher for truth dies, holding in his hand a feather from the wing of the elusive bird. Cadence and harmony are, in poetry, an echo of the Beautiful; this draws on the seeker, and the true poet is but a magician inspired by the many-sided appeals of beauty. Creating pictures in every line, in most cases with a direct address to the feelings, the poet plucks the strings of the heart. His attack is on the emotions, yet our best poets have always in mind that powerful citadel the intellect that gives little quarter to the feelings. When we have bent our minds over the Mahabharata, the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Koran, the Talmud, the Bible, the *Ænied*, Dante's Divine Comedy, and Shakespeare, we are left with the idea that the whole of these are only mass attacks on the two sides of us—the head and the heart, or intellect and emotion. And it may explain that it is easier to feel than to think. Our poets take us into dubious company as a consequence; the subtle appeal of beauty through the singers is something to excite caution, and in examining some of the examples of the beautiful in poetry, I found that the best satisfied both the head and the heart.

In Book XXIV. of the Iliad the music of sorrow led me to that point where the beauty in magnanimity was clear. A poet, or poets, touching on eternal happenings in the pageant of life, at this place, was, by art, adding to the stature of human beings. Without going further back in history, for this trait can also be found in the Bhagavad-Gita, here was the dawn of chivalry and something more. It was the beginning of the idea that ultimately truth would not be physically strongest. Pity was no Greek virtue, but, in the relaxing of Achille's hate for Hector, the magician of words, his world being in his imagination, brought me to beauty in another form. How cunningly, too, has Homer staged this scene, with the unconsolable passion of Achilles for his dead friend Patroclus.

A significant phrase, when the welter house of history is

surveyed, with its wars, massacres, endless feuds and divisions, is to be found in the two line, 672-673 :

Thus speaking he clasped the old man's right hand at the wrist,
lest he should be anywise afraid at heart.

Here is matter in symbolism enough for a book; what words could not explain, was made clear in signs. The beginning was made, however small, in trust; with the clasping of human hands paradise could be brought to earth, but this is but a poet's dream. In the world of imagination dwell for ever the figures of Priam and Achilles, imperishable to me at least, as a form of beauty in the beginning of human qualities to be emulated, to be desired, to be willed by those who are not content with a cynic's or a saint's acceptance of the world.

When Cæsar was conquering Britain, Virgil was achieving victories in a more substantial direction. He was also, by imitation, paying a tribute to Homer in his *Æneid*. In a magnificent splinter from the original, Virgil takes up the theme of war with barbarism, and, in the first few lines plunges into his subject—the story of a man noted for his goodness forced by the queen of heaven to pass through many trials, to undergo so many hardships. In book vi. 838-878, the quality of pity undergoes a slight re-valuation—"to impose the ways of peace, to spare the humbled, and to crush the proud." *Æneas*, the civilizer of men, through the genius of Virgil, adds in a measure to the stature of man, through the medium of making pity a virtue.

In the gallop of history, Schopenhauer brings this quality home—perhaps a debatable quality—when he says that anyone and everyone may be addressed in truth as "fellow-sufferer." There was in the character of *Æneas*, manly attributes, and in my quest, I found here, beauty in another form. His "piety" or to put it better, his "natural affection" was to me, another form wherein I recognized the beautiful, and it made me prefer to be in hell with Virgil rather than be in paradise with Dante.

Lowell has in a phrase given a clear picture of two poets: "With Dante the main question is the saving of the soul, with Chaucer it is the conduct of life." In the "Knight's Tale," once again, I found the subject of pity:—

"For pitee renneth soone in gentil herte."

There was then, a softening of the animal man; the poets' art was humanizing him. The stringer of rhymes was intent on giving or adding a value to man that was only latent or non-existent.

Chaucer rather than Dante, was for me the poet who was nearest my heart. He keeps to the earth of Meredith, of Jeffries—to the world of fact, and even the world's beauty

has not yet been completely explored. Blake's creed was eternal forgiveness—a creed that requires no ritual, no ceremony and no authority; Chaucer, in his works, through his treatment of the weaknesses, the foibles, and the petty vices of his characters, put into practice Blake's very simple ideas. Beauty at this point has taken on a different aspect; it has moved from the external and physical world, to beauty in character and conduct, but it is not so clearly discernible as the beauty of colour and form. An effort has to be made to find it, in study, and contemplation. And this no doubt is the reason why the quest is abandoned for the easier pursuit of superficial pleasures.

In the humanity of Homer, Virgil and Chaucer, there was, for me, this very real side of the beautiful which I had pursued from the age of five. This quality is permanent and fixed and satisfying; it is not caught at first glance, and it is not cultivated or acquired in a day. The real struggle with a man is when he begins on himself, and it is possible that beauty without is helpful to the acquisition of beauty within.

There is to one who is not superficial a certain beauty in the cheerfulness of Horace, as there is beauty in the dignity and effort of Lucretius to tell man to get up from a kneeling position in the world. The mind has to be bent in the search, but the reward is worth it, and it is typical of the true beauty in the works of giants that it may be visited again and again for inspiration and consolation alike.

In poetry, the beautiful allures; it has changed its form, and in the music of sound with sense, the seeker may continue his quest enjoying the counsel and wisdom of those creative minds that have left their mark in imperishable words. The classic world of poetry is the world of caution, of austere art; there is ever-present acknowledgment of beauty in treatment, choice of subject, and elevation of thought. And when the mind is tired, when the new is not true; it may turn with relief to a Greek drama, to a Chorus of Æschylus, to a re-reading of the story of Nausicaa, to the moderate and temperate wisdom of Horace, for beauty gives compensation to those who demand not overmuch and realize the limitations of things that matter.

VI.—POETRY.

IN the reign of Queen Elizabeth a star of great magnitude shone over lesser lights, and something happened in the history of the consciousness of man. It seemed that one genius was capable of comprehending everything there was to be known about man. In Shakespeare I found the beauty of understanding; in his sonnets there was for me the cold purity of thought, untouched by the clamour of the market

place, yet near to the heart of men who desire to know and to speak truth—one of the hardest tasks. The foundations of ethics may be no stronger than a spider's thread; the tiger and the ape in man may have to go for good. The beginning of its disappearance might start with a poet's truth:—

Yet who knows not conscience is born of love?

We may deplore the brutal frankness of Elizabethan speech, the coarseness of pastimes, the cheapness of life, but the present day has evils far worse. That this thought was born in that age is our good fortune; we have only to live up to it. Through the spring colours of his comedies, the heavy purples of his tragedies, into the mellow sunshine of "A Winter's Tale" and the "Tempest," I was carried by the spirit of search for the Beautiful; that I found it was a compensation for the years of wandering. To Marlowe, with his fire, and mighty line I was also indebted. In the opening of the "Jew of Malta," there was for me a great truth:—

I count religion but a childish toy,
And hold there is no sin but ignorance.

Marlowe was a grown-up man. True courage with knowledge was there, to be admired when we look with provisional sympathy on his age, but in all his plays and poems he shows a command of description of natural beauty as one who knew his subject and embroidered his tales with almost an excess of the beautiful.

In Milton I was drawn by his play of "Samson Agonistes." There was a haunting sweetness in "Lycidas"—perhaps because of its Greek fatalism, and apart from its beauty of language. His "Il Penseroso" is a mixture of Christianity and Platonism, but his "L'Allegro" does not contain one Christian simile, and the old puritan well and truly pays homage to knowledge—and the stage. His noble words on liberty brought me further in my quest and, in a Dedication to his essays on various aspects of Christian belief, there was a peculiar joy in finding, what I might term, "growth": "I earnestly beseech all lovers of truth, not to cry out that the Church is thrown into confusion by that freedom of discussion and inquiry which is granted to the schools, and ought certainly to be refused to no believer, since we are ordered to 'to prove all things,' and since the daily progress of the light of truth is productive far less of disturbance to the Church, than of illumination and edification." It was therefore, after this, a natural step to the few forcible words of gold in the Areopagitica: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." Here, then, was the object of my quest in another form. It was not the freedom of license, but the

cry of a man on behalf of men, and a precious picture from an age that has gone lingers in my mind—of Milton in the autumn of his life, "sitting in a gray coarse cloth coat, at the door of his house near Bunhill Fields, in warm sunny weather, enjoying the fresh air."

Someone has stated that logic is the closed fist. In the couplets of Pope there was abundant matter to bid me persevere. I found a gem of beauty, where rhyme was wedded to wisdom. Here was the science of logic with the music of the poet; here was an amulet that I might touch every day to advantage, keep my feet on the earth, and be free from the tangled growth of fruitless dispute. From "An Essay on Man," then, there was the beauty of an idea circumscribed almost to the size of a pin-point, but sufficient to give motive power for a lifetime :—

Say first of God above, or man below,
What can we reason, but from what we know?

Not in profusion, or extravagance or waste, but in the fine art of compression I was to salute again, the object of my search. In aphorism, as in the point of the eye it was possible by a genius to see the world with its mountains, valleys, clouds and boundless seas. This little gem of one line with its light has been helpful, and in another form I found it in Emerson : "A man should not tell me that he has walked among angels; his proof is, that his eloquence makes me one."

Every poet, popular, little known, obscure, encouraged me to continue in the hope of reaching some Ultima Thule. But that was not to be, and though the argosy of youth bids one to hope at one day to hail the land where there is nothing more to be known, the quieter reflection of age whispers that everything is within. It must obviously be a catalogue of names to cite the various poets of all ages wherein this magic of beauty resides. The vigorous beauty of Blake, the torrential sweep and rhythm of Swinburne, the measured sweetness of Tennyson, the arresting yet tantalising challenge of Browning, the domestic pictures of Cowper, the close-set jewels of Meredith—still the spirit of search does not cry out—hold enough!—and beauty moves among these realms like a will o' the wisp.

To weave into the texture of the philosophy of my own life this poetical quality of beauty created by dreamers, idealists and star-gazers was a necessity. There could be no resting, no landing even at the Utopia of poetry, but its music was soothing, invigorating, bracing—I should need it all. The closed fist of logic intruded, and although the ease-loving part of me said stay, there was another that commanded me to go forward. I had not met Beauty face to face, but in looking backward to her first faint appearance in a meadow, in the simple natural picture that unfolded

itself to a youthful consciousness, I was grateful. What was true then, I can affirm is true now, and by my life in some kind of unfinished way I had really lived and tested the words of Keats :—

Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

VII.—PROSE.

If I was only looking at the living world of writers, what a hard task for me to find Beauty, but, as the spacious past holds so many, my gratitude to the numberless dead must be recorded for among the giants I found the marks where the object of my search was visible. She had been sought for by others who had gone through the same experiences, and growth in myself made it recognizable. To Defoe, then, I must pay tribute, with his immortal story of Robinson Crusoe. He has touched the enchanting beauty of romance that will enthrall generations unborn. He has, by a simple narrative, caught up adventure, where the spirit of imagination was always adjacent to reality; he had, by sheer force, compelled time to stand still; he had, by genius forever circumscribed the happy period of youth with a book. For youth alone? No, never! For those also who find refreshment of the mind in the infinite kingdom of romance that is lacking in the grey ordinary world. In Crusoe's Calendar the record of his soliloquy lets in the spirit of reason: . . . "I was very pensive upon the subject of my present condition, when Reason, as it were, put in expostulating with me the other way, thus: 'Well, you are in a desolate condition, it is true; but, pray remember, where are the rest of you? Did not you come, eleven of you, into the boat? Where are the ten? Why were not they saved, and you lost? Why are you singled out? Is it better to be here or there?' And then I pointed to the sea. All evils are to be considered with the good that is in them, and with what worse attended them." Here was Beauty in a very modest dress; not as it were in a painting by Botticelli, but carrying the charm of common sense in the narrative of Defoe.

Another aspect of her was to be found in the medieval novel of *Aucassin and Nicolette*. The fair Nicolette against whose instep the broken daisies showed altogether black, was imprisoned; in pleading for her Aucassin replies to the Viscount's advice: "In Paradise what have I to do? I care not to enter, but only to have Nicolette, my very sweet friend, whom I love so dearly well. For into Paradise go none but such people as I will tell you of. There go those aged priests, and those old cripples, and the maimed, who all day long and all night cough before the altars, and in the crypts

beneath the churches; those who go in worn old mantles and old tattered habits; who are naked, and barefoot, and full of sores; who are dying of hunger and of thirst, of cold and of wretchedness. Such as these enter in Paradise, and with them have I nought to do. But in Hell will I go. For to Hell go the fair clerks and the fair knights who are slain in the tourney and the great wars, and the stout archer and the loyal man. With them will I go. And there go the fair and courteous ladies, who have friends, two or three; together with their wedded lords. And there pass the gold and the silver, the ermine and all rich furs, harpers and minstrels, and the happy of the world. With these will I go, so only that I have Nicolette, my very sweet friend, by my side."

This story may be considered as a romantic prelude to the Renaissance. In the answer of Aucassin to Count Garin, I heard the beginning of a challenge to authority. In the description of Nicolette's escape (I refer to Mr. Eugene Mason's translation in the *Everyman Library*) I was moved to believe that the original writer or writers were in love with pretty descriptive language. For me, there seemed to be a sheer love of beauty in word painting—exquisite and riotous excess and striving to impress the beauty of Nicolette on the reader. A free spirit was at work; beauty of the human form, colour, brightness, movement—the discovery that the human body differed from the saint's description of it—this discovery seemed to be almost as important as that of Columbus. What then was it all but the story of human love—a story that has the touch of immortality, near to the hearts of men and women. In this romance I found Beauty, as old as the hills, and as young as a crystal drop of morning dew.

Another turning brought me again to Beauty—this time in Schiller's *Æsthetical Essays*. It is said that Bismarck out-witted diplomatists by telling the truth; could you not have deceived one of Sterne's characters three times a day if twice was not enough for your purpose? But, in Schiller, I found something that awoke a response in me, for with the involved, the tortuous, the ambiguous, I wanted nothing to do; like Lucian's reply to Timotheus, I had but a few paces to go along the corridor of life, and I could not compromise with the efforts of those who wished to make the simple complex. Here then was the object of my quest, what I had often thought, but could not express in this manner: "Simplicity in the mode of thinking cannot then ever be the act of a depraved man; this quality only belongs to children, and to men who are children in heart. It often happens to these in the midst of the artificial relations of the great world to act or to think in a simple manner. Being themselves of a truly good and humane nature, they forget that

they have to do with a depraved world; and they act, even in the court of kings, with an ingenuousness and an innocence that are only found in the world of pastoral idylls." This quality I found in Emerson, in Lucretius, in Horace, in Blake, in Schopenhauer, in Gorki, and in Wilde. In all these writers, there was, I felt sure, a man speaking, and they had followed the advice of the old savage Carlyle—"Be a man before you become a writer." In Wilde's *The Soul of Man*, he takes the luxury of saying what he thinks as a right—not a privilege, and with Voltaire he had become a vehicle of truth.

In *The History of European Morals*, Lecky uses this simplicity in two sentences that cover the whole world of ethics: "The eye of the pagan philosopher was ever fixed upon virtue, the eye of the Christian teacher upon sin. The first sought to amend men by extolling the beauty of holiness; the second by awakening the sentiment of remorse." And again, in two simple sentences, "The ethics of paganism were part of a philosophy. The ethics of Christianity were part of a religion."

Beauty in the ethical world, to me at least, was to be found in the pagan world, where obsessions and cloudy metaphysics had no place. Rewards for doing the right thing as near as human being could approximate? This was incompatible with all the best that the shepherds of humanity had spoken.

In Schopenhauer there was what might be called a devastating simplicity which I could not sense until many years had gone in search and sometimes fruitless quest. Much stubble and thicket of bewilderment and doubt was cleared away by his extremely simple philosophy. With clear eyes he looked on the topsy-turvydom of useless metaphysics, and his books compelled me to shut many books for good, and look with my own eyes on the book of life, which in a man's existence only closes once. There was beauty in this form, this power, this genius of reducing the complex to terms of understanding, yet his truths spelt disaster to countless interests and they are too strong for the eyes of everyone to behold.

Another gateway on my quest was opened by Richard Jefferies, who dedicated his life to an effort to transfer to others his impression of beauty. It is unthinkable that he has failed, and his fidelity to one spacious idea proves that what has many forms is a unity that we cannot deny. His *Story of My Heart* is the outpouring of an excess of adoration for the simple things of life with the sun as a centre and source of inspiration. *The Pageant of Summer*, that silently takes its immortal place in literature, does not do so by beauty alone. From it, there is the gentle glow of helpfulness to those who respond, and his simple truths from nature draw their vitality from the earth. "Let us labour," he says, "to make the heart grow larger as we become older,"

and to make this thought clear, he continues, "as the spreading oak gives more shelter." And, in a perfect affirmation of acceptance to that which I had set out to find from first glimpsing a lady-smock in a meadow, he writes: "The hours when the mind is absorbed by beauty are the only hours when we really live, so that the longer we can stay among these things so much the more is snatched from inevitable Time."

There was recompense for me in following the path which had no end. Truths were caught up in the robes of the figure I pursued; truths were left on the way where Beauty had gone ahead, and a retrospect brings the ratification of choice prompted by external impressions at an early age. I could wish no one a happier entrance to the world than that I had myself for it is in the truest sense, and apart from all mythical vapourings, the "Garden of Eden."

VIII.—PHILOSOPHY.

WISDOM, someone wrote, was the art of being at home in the world. Tentatively, I had reached out to many books, read them, absorbed them, and taken the advice of Montaigne to make them part of oneself. But there was still lacking that straight way to harmonize with those visions of beauty that had beckoned me onwards with friendly signs. Philosophy could not be put on like a garment; it must grow into one's life. And philosophy from books was one thing; philosophy from life itself was frequently another. A certain distrust of bookish knowledge came along after the unsuccessful attempt at making theory fit with practice. There were ways and modes and attitudes to be gathered from the best that India could give me, but in themselves, they were incomplete. Indian philosophy is the nearest approach to Coleridge's definition of life being all thought, but this was the opposite of the Greek conception that life was action. Well, what is life? Is it not a blend of both? If I could therefore take the best of philosophy from India together with the best from Greece could I not, in some way, continue my quest? There was a stern discipline required to cut through the jungle of Hindu mythology; there was the noting of its parallelism with Greek mythology, until I came to something in the Vishnu Purana, and the Mahabarata worthy of concentration and study. To the same fountain as Emerson I had found my way in the Vishnu Purana; "The Earth is upheld by the veracity of those who have subdued their passions." Emerson wrote this in a slightly different form, but my feet were covering the same ground that others had been over in a similar quest. Rabelais also had been to this place, but, when the myth and superfluous

bewilderment were ignored, there were truths worth the search. Parallel almost with the writings of Spinoza, I found the following foundation of the thought that the truth shall set you free: "The mind of man is the cause both of his bondage and his liberation: its addiction to the objects of sense is the means of his bondage; its separation from objects of sense is the means of his freedom." In other words, possessions possess us. Here then was Beauty in another form, but she had to be striven for; she did not appear now in the external form I had encountered when a child. More arduous was the quest, but the white light of truth was a compensation, and more difficult was it to retain and use this revelation in daily life. It was easy to run the eye over this and similar passages, but the struggle began when I tried to incorporate it into everyday existence, and many times I failed.

Separating the gold from the dross, there were choice thoughts to be found in the Bhagavad Gîtâ. I found excellent schooling in prudence, fortitude, meditation, and exercise in these and others gave an increase to the powers of intuition which were dynamic if always used in the mood of disinterested interest; but here again, it was a hard task, but when once undertaken, there was nothing but burnt boats to be seen if I looked backwards. How well did my contact with Indian literature ratify the opinion of Schopenhauer: "Nowhere in the world is there a study so beneficial and elevating." In the "Light of Asia" there was a delightful introduction to a mode of conduct that offered no threats and no rewards, but as far as finite knowledge went, it was a strong staff to use, and the difference between a staff and a crutch is the difference between Eastern thought and Western religion.

In the essay of Plotinus "On the Beautiful," there is a heavy demand made on the intellect in order to gain an appreciation of his aim. He considers the Good as the fountain and principle of the Beautiful. Something tangible, in a world of abstractions, I found in his definition that the beautiful was the receptacle of ideas. This is a very generous definition, but it was a valuation made by a good man, if we are to believe what fragmentary records we have of his life. According to the introduction to the Select Works of Plotinus, "this philosopher was easy of access to all his friends and adherents, and, although he lived in Rome for twenty-six years, he had no enemy in that city. Noble persons of both sexes at the point of death committed their children and their property to Plotinus, as to a certain sacred and divine guardian. If this be true, then his valuation that the beautiful is the receptacle of ideas is perfectly clear and easy to comprehend. The only difficulty with Plotinus is the number of his commentators who bring to him precon-

ceived ideas, axes to grind, and perhaps the fatal facility of patronage.

In line of historical descent with this illustrious name is that of George Santayana. This modern philosopher trims and guards the sacred flame of philosophy in language that is like, for want of a better description, volts of electricity. In compression, in substance, in obscurity being the exception and not the rule, George Santayana is one of a few who knows what he means, and can transfer his meaning to paper. In my quest it was so that I should find him. He writes: "There is a sense—a somewhat esoteric sense—in which such essences as beauty may be called 'the most real things in the universe.'"

On this, my pilgrimage, I must ask you to stay and look at the pictures I have seen. Here is a landscape extending from the beginning of Time, and in one part of it, Santayana has contributed his share in the following language, at the same time enriching the word spirituality and making it possible for universal acceptance. "Spirituality comes precisely of surrendering this animal arrogance, and this moral fanaticism, and substituting for them pure intelligence: not a discoursing cleverness or scepticism, but perfect candour and impartial vision. Spirit is merciful and tender because it has no private motive to make it spiteful; yet it is unflinchingly austere because it cannot make any private motive its own." There, then, particularly in the end of this passage is the beauty of the lady's-smock in the meadow. What is this I am saying? Confusion? mixing ideas with ideals, with the characteristic touch of the mystic? What connexion or association is there with a flower and philosophy? My own philosophy has told me that I cannot have nor want, one without the other, and there I see the figure of the Beautiful in both. "It cannot make any private motive its own"—what is this but looking on life through the clear windows of disinterest in preference to looking through the coloured windows of desire, possession, or personal advantage? The same detached beauty is the four, veined petals of the lady's-smock, clustered round with human association was plainly visible in the calm beauty of this passage that made the way straight—and difficult, but not to be given up for that reason. In pursuing external beauty I had only made a circle returning to myself, but, I came back laden with treasure, had robbed nobody, had hurt no feelings, for beauty was like the sun described by Shakespeare in "The Winter's Tale," in the words of the exquisite Perdita:—

"The self-same sun that shines upon his court,
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on all alike."

And then came the revelation of beauty in the lives of

those by whom I was surrounded. What unwritten history to me was there in a pair of woman's hands, in a pair of labourer's hands, in the wrinkled and time-beaten face of a sentient being, in the tone of a voice, in an attitude, in a growth of character; it were best to forget the worst—to let it go quickly through memory's sieve, to follow beauty for she had not played me false. Rather she led me to take up the quest, and at a certain time, without promise and ostentation, that which I sought came to me; there was no desire for roving about in the vast fields of speculation, for she had taught me reconciliation to myself.

IX.—PHILOSOPHY.

THE popular idea of a materialist's life is that it is a heap of cinders or a mountain of despair. The world of beauty according to this misconception is a closed book, and the unfortunate victim is supposed to spend his life in a laboratory of gloom, or pessimism. Like most popular ideas this is wrong. Nietzsche, with his ability to speak volumes in a few words, posed the world as an æsthetic phenomenon. And this was the end which I reached in my quest. Materialism helped me to untie metaphysical knots that never were really knotted, and it never once smudged the fair face of beauty wherever my search had taken me in nature: beauty, physical beauty or in the beauty wrought by human hands in pictures, sculpture, music or in the solace of good books. In the world of beauty there was room enough, and to spare, to find acceptance and welcome by the choicest spirits with their inheritance of wise counsel that never carried me to the stars and then let me suffer the fate of Icarus.

In Theognis there was the substance of common sense. Even in the Green world of myth, there was one striking aspect of beauty; the children of history never despised the body. The Maxims of Theognis were hard, brilliant, yet sufficiently alluring to make me take them for my own: "The practice of mischief, look you, among men is easy: but the method of good, Cyrnus, is difficult." This was quickly perceived when experience proved that the world was chiefly peopled by negative forces intent on the destruction of any life-furthering ideas and a mastery of life. Again, somewhere in the region of the battle plane of Arjuna in the Mahabharata was the following thought: "No one of mine enemies will I blame, if he be noble; no, nor will I commend a friend, if he be a mean man." Theognis, who had suffered exile, could see with clear eyes, certain things that we call values in life, and what is life without human values? A truth to be found in Buddha, and also in Nietzsche was crystallized forever in the following: "Nought, Cyrnus, is

more unjust than anger, which hurts its possessor, by meanly indulging passion."

There was here a psychological truth, difficult to grasp, difficult to practise, but one of the chief steps to be taken and never retraced in attaining individual kingship—a reconciliation to oneself, a conservation of power, and an acceptance of the world without wishing for it to be any different.

In Marcus Aurelius; the quality of beauty led me to appreciate the dignity and depth of one of history's noble men. There is the fatalism of existence, unsought, but by human effort to be overcome. His work was written with blood; his philosophy was hewn from the quarry that leaves so many helpless, hopeless and bewildered. It is like a symphony from the sea when it protests with powerful winds and black night. There must be delicate ears or the wonderful music cannot be heard. It is man's turmoil and struggle with reality, and we do reverence to the human mind in acknowledging in sober truth. Why he wrote his thoughts is one of those titanic mysteries that give, in a small way, a glimpse of human immortality. It is also a magnificent answer to the cynic question of what has posterity done for us? It is, in brief, a noble Roman's tribute to the aristocracy of his own species. Open him where you will, and a bonfire of your other books would not disturb you.

"Men exist for the sake of one another. Teach them then or bear with them."

This idea of dependence is one that by its neglect causes discord, for we fundamentally belong to the great human family in which my quest had commanded me to hope for good, for, as Bosanquet stated: "Philosophy has not to do with a universe different from the one with which the plain man is concerned"; and I found kinship with his idea with that of Maxim Gorki in one of his excellent and human tales: "It is said that everyone is a brother to another against his own will."

When I found *The Candle of Vision*, in which the author "A.E.," tried to set down what element of truth lay in imagination, another friend beckoned me on in my quest. He has poetic quality, and for that reason I approached him with care, but it was almost a needless precaution, as he belongs to the noble band of earth-worshippers in line with Meredith and Richard Jefferies. He presents pantheism in a form that does not ask for blind acceptance—all that he asks is for the reader to try to get his view-point, and, for us, if the best in the universe is not here, what is the use of locating it in the irrevocable past? From his own meditations and close contact with the earth, he had come to the following conclusion—and brought me with him. "I knew the Golden Age was all about me, and it was we who had been blind to it, but that it had never passed away from

the world." There is a trick in time; the solution is attempted by those who formulate a fourth dimension, or by those who call themselves mystics. We are all in a stream, where the touch of hands, the tone of voices, sympathies and antipathies all combine to make us beat our hands against the prison bars of past, present, and future, and one little word at some time will make all clear that is only now opaque. "A.E." had successfully brought me to look within myself, and then look outwards with a better vision.

Another writer to whom my quest had brought me was Eden Phillpotts. Although he moved in the land of tragedy and in the world of passions, there was the insistent note on the essential goodness of man whom Victor Hugo described as the tadpole of an angel. The genii of Dartmoor had the power to make his characters live and his pictures of the country are all seen through the eyes of beauty and human sympathy. Wisdom of the earth he has with abundance, and the novel in his hands becomes an instrument for the wide diffusion of those truths that humanity loses at its peril. Tradition, history, earth-lore, a contact with our poor plodding, fighting and brawling ancestors; we have not too many writers who can effectively make a contact with the founders of the race by carrying on the torch of wisdom. And when the fierceness and intensity of modern life, mainly about nothing, or at best a witches' dance round a worn-out money system—when this is put in its proper place, there will be a true recognition of those who have never been false to the human race. Eden Phillpotts will have done his share, and Maeterlinck, with his quiet insistence on beauty, which cannot be glimpsed by many at present, will also share the honour to which multitudes are deaf and blind. The name of Anatole France will also be included with those who have, with a wide sweep, included the past and present, and it was a joy to me to find the following, written by a humanist: "Ever the goal is hidden from man. I have asked my way of all those, priests, scholars, wizards, or philosophers, who claim to know the geography of the Unknown. None of them has been able exactly to point out the perfect way to me. That is why the road I prefer is the one on which the greatest number of leafy elms uprear themselves beneath the most smiling sky. The feeling for the beautiful leads me on. Who is sure of having found a better guide?" My own affirmation to this choice was made nearly forty years ago; there is not the slightest tinge of regret in the decision I made, and I wonder what reader or readers of this book can share the experience with me!

X.—CONCLUSION.

It is more difficult to make an end than a beginning; it is more difficult to solve problems than create them, and the reader will find counsel in abundance in all directions, for a way of life. Pre-determined as all human beings are to fit their physical environment, they are at liberty, as individuals, to create their own ideals in the mental world, on condition that they are intellectually self-reliant. For intellectual slaves content to have their thinking done by others, there is a mass surrender to interests in which half-lights of truth are accepted for the full light of noon; on these the sure-footed follower of the Beautiful will have no desire to sit in judgment. The Beautiful does not make converts by the sword; it does not offer rewards, it does not threaten with punishments, nor does it create an undergrowth of metaphysical tangles beloved by Platonists who want to draw their sustenance from the earth and inhabit the skies. A way of life! Frankly, I know of none, but I have an important proviso to make to this confession—Beauty is a tracing over rough country that will bring to the wayfarer's elbow, justice, equity, and tolerance, and sympathy for one's fellow creatures. There are mistakes to be made even in the practical application of sympathy, and here the wisdom of the serpent will have to be used.

To be rewarded for having lived a good life is on a low ethical plane that has little appeal to those who regard the world as fertile in obstacles. An individual must be everybody before he could teach anyone the way; ultimately we are alone—a little separate world, or a cage. In a study of Vincent Van Gogh, by Julius Meier Graefe, the artist asks: "Do you know what takes away the cage? Every profound relationship, brotherhood, friendship, love. They open the cage like a magic key. If you lose the key, existence becomes a living death. He who creates sympathy creates life." And, in the beauty of this sentiment, we find that it has its source in what I have taken for a guiding star.

Maxim Gorki, whose writings have not yet found general acceptance by the world, records in simple and sincere language his affection and reverence for his Grandmother. She was a choice spirit, fortunate in a gifted grandson who would be the last to deny that other women as noble and good existed. This was of life, which can never be known but only imagined, is mentioned in Gorki's book *In the World*. Speaking to him, she says:—

"You are young yet, you don't know how to live."

"That is what they all say to one another: 'You don't know how to live'—peasants, sailors, Aunt Matrena to her son—but how does one learn?" She compressed her lips and shook her head.

"I don't know myself."

"And yet you say the same as the others!"

"And why should I not say it?" replied Grandmother calmly. "You must not be offended. You are young, you are not expected to know. And who does know, after all? Only rogues."

There is, therefore, only a modest claim for the Beautiful, which unconsciously draws the individual to an appreciation of its protean form; it gives satisfaction and confers a value on life that, throughout the ages, may be accepted as a standard without vague fears and hopes of its origin. In Helen of Troy, covered with myth in a thousand disguises, Beauty has been taken to the home of the human heart, and in this there was the typical precision of the Greek for marking a value. It has persisted, but to what uses it has been placed throughout history is not the subject of these, perhaps—imperfect studies, for Beauty needs no dogma for its defence. That the quest will lead to Beauty in all the varied manifestations of life is desirable; in the ultimate end it may be found in the wise and honeyed words of Montaigne: "The soul that feeds upon philosophy must, by its healthiness, impart to the body courage and strength; its internal peace and happiness must shine forth with that brilliancy in which noble pride is combined with an active and joyful nobility, with contentment and peace. The truest sign of wisdom is a constantly peaceful disposition of mind, a temperament as clear and unclouded as the quiet starry heaven. Its mission is to calm the storms of the spirit with no lying sophisms, but by simple and tangible proof; its aim is that beneficence which dwells not upon the perpendicular mountain side, steep and unattainable, as the scholastics would have us believe." Here, then, we reach fair haven. Hail and farewell, ye pilgrims, knights, troubadours, men of law, scientists and students in your quest between the furrows and the stars; Chaucer and Blake knew you all, whatever outward bodily form you have; for mankind is the same throughout the ages, and types persist. From simple flower in the field to flowers of the mind is a journey—good fortune attend you all in the Quest of the Beautiful.

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